

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9599
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION USUN
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 28731

USMTN

USEEC

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: OGEN UN FR
SUBJ: ANALYSIS OF FOREIGN MINISTER GUIRINGAUD'S UNGA
ADDRESS

REF: (A) USUN 3382 (B) USUN 3383

SUMMARY: EMBASSY CONSIDERS GUIRINGAUD'S UNGA SPEECH
ESSENTIALLY DEFENSIVE IN THE SENSE THAT IT BROKE NO NEW
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GROUND AND IS DESIGNED TO PLACE PARIS' FOREIGN POLICY
ON A LOFTY PLAIN, UNASSAILABLE EITHER IN TERMS OF
INTERNAL FRENCH POLITICS OR WITHIN THE UN. IT
PORTRAYED FRANCE NOT ONLY AS CONCERNED WITH THE CRISES
OF THE THIRD WORLD, BUT ALSO AS SHARING US CONCERN
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOVIET CONCERN FOR DISARMAMENT.
END SUMMARY.

1. FOREIGN MINISTER GUIRINGAUD'S SEPT 28 SPEECH TO THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY IS AN APPARENTLY SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO SITUATE FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY ON THE UNASSAILABLE MIDDLE GROUND OF WORLD AFFAIRS. IT PORTRAYS FRANCE AS BEING ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY IN THE THIRD WORLD, AND EVEN INVENTOR OF BOTH DETENTE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST AND DIALOGUE BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH. IT CRITICIZES THE SUPERPOWERS, BUT ALSO CONTAINS A GESTURE TOWARD EACH ONE SEPARATELY. IT REVEALS NOTHING NEW OR INNOVATIVE IN FRENCH DIPLOMACY.

2. FROM THE DOMESTIC VIEWPOINT THE SPEECH IS EQUALLY DEFENSIVE; IT LIFTS FOREIGN POLICY ONTO A PLATEAU ABOVE PARTISAN POLITICS BY MAKING LOFTY JUDGEMENTS WHICH CANNOT SUBJECT THE GOVERNMENT TO ATTACK DURING THE CURRENT ELECTORAL PERIOD. IN THIS RESPECT IT IS IN THE STRAIGHT LINE OF UNGA SPEECHES MADE BY FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE FIFTH REPUBLIC, FROM THE PESSIMISTIC OPENING LINES, TO THE FLAG-WAVING FINAL SENTENCES. IT CONTAINS ECHOES OF GAULLIST "HAUTEUR," AND PUBLIC EMPHASIS ON FRANCE'S INDEPENDENT PATH. ABSENT ARE ANY REFERENCES TO RECENT DIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICAN AFFAIRS, OF WHICH PRESIDENT GISCARD HAD BEEN SO PROUD IN EARLIER FOREIGN POLICY PRONOUNCEMENTS.
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3. FRENCH MEDIA GENERALLY PAID LITTLE ATTENTION TO GUIRINGAUD'S SPEECH, PRESUMABLY BECAUSE IT BROKE NO NEW GROUND. LE MONDE'S SEPT 30 EDITORIAL COMMENDS THE HIGH-SOUNDING PHRASES BUT CHARGES THAT FRANCE TODAY LACKS THE MATERIAL AND MORAL BASIS FOR WHAT IT PREACHES.

4. MIDDLE EAST. GUIRINGAUD TOOK A POSITION PREDICTABLY SYMPATHETIC TO ARAB CONCERNS. HIS EMPHASIS ON THE RIGHT OF THE PALESTINIANS TO A HOMELAND ("PATRIE") AND THE NECESSITY OF PALESTINIAN INVOLVEMENT IN PEACE NEGOTIATIONS -- WHILE ARTFULLY SKIRTING THE QUESTION OF PLO INVOLVEMENT -- BROKE NO NEW GROUND. GUIRINGAUD ATTEMPTED TO BALANCE HIS ME POSITION BY USING ESSENTIALLY THE LANGUAGE OF 242 IN SPEAKING OF ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO RECOGNITION AND SECURE BORDERS AND MADE A FURTHER GESTURE TO ISRAELI CONCERNS BY SPEAKING OF REAL PEACE "WHICH IMPLIES NORMAL RELATIONS."

5. AFRICA. WE WERE STRUCK BY GUIRINGAUD'S EMPHASIS ON THE PROBLEMS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA. HE ASSOCIATED FRANCE CLEARLY WITH THE US/UK EFFORT IN RHODESIA AND

THE FIVE POWER INITIATIVE IN NAMIBIA. HE ALSO CAME
DOWN SURPRISINGLY HARD ON APARTHEID. IN THIS HE WAS
MAKING A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE AS WELL AS REACTING TO
THE MAJOR PREOCCUPATION OF AFRICA WHERE FRENCH INTERESTS
ARE VAST. HIS CALL FOR RESPECT OF SOVEREIGNTY AND

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 28731

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TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY IS A REFLECTION OF THE DEEP FRENCH
CONCERN THAT THE FIGHTING BETWEEN ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA
COULD BE THE FIRST OF MANY AFRICAN WARS OF IRRIDENTISM
WHICH COULD UPSET THE FRAGILE STABILITY NECESSARY FOR
THE PROGRESS OF THE CONTINENT AND SPECIFICALLY FOR THE
PURSUIT OF FRENCH INTERESTS THERE.

6. DISARMAMENT. GUIRINGAUD CITED THE NEED FOR A
REDUCTION IN ARMAMENTS LEVELS, A THEME HE HAD TOUCHED

ON IN A SEPT 14 LE MONDE INTERVIEW. HOWEVER, HE WENT FURTHERIN REFERRING TO REDUCTIONS IN BOTH NUCLEAR AND CONFIDENTIAL

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CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS. GUIRINGAUD ALSO TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO A LITTLE GRANDSTANDING BY TAKING A SWIPE AT THE TWO SUPER POWERS WHOSE ARSENALS HE DESCRIBED AS "OUT OF ALL PROPORTION . . . WITH WHAT IS NEEDED FOR THE WORLD'S STRATEGIC BALANCE." THE TWO SUPER POWERS MAY WELL RECEIVE SIMILAR TREATMENT IN THE ULTIMATE GOF DISARMAMENT INITIATIVE. GUIRINGAUD PAID RITUAL RESPECT TO VERIFICATION AND NON-DISCRIMINATION. IN TOTO, HE TOLD US NOTHING MORE ABOUT THE DISARMAMENT INITIATIVE WHICH WILL NOT BE ANNOUNCED IN DETAIL UNTIL NEXT YEAR. THAT GUIRINGAUD NEVERTHELESS DEVOTED MORE TIME TO DISARMAMENT THAN TO ANY OTHER SINGLE OBJECTIVE SHOULD PLEASE THE SOVIETS, WHO HAVE URGED FRANCE TO PUT MORE EMPHASIS IN THAT DIRECTION.

7. ASIA. GUIRINGAUD CONGRATULATED HIMSELF ON THE EXCELLENCE OF PARIS' RELATIONS WITH PEKING AND WITH PREDICTABLE WARMTH EXPRESSED FRANCE'S PLEASURE THAT VIETNAM WAS JOINING THE UN. SOMEWHAT SURPRISINGLY FRANCE BOTHERED TO CRITICIZE KAMPUCHEA'S VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS. IT WAS A RATHER SAFE SHOT AT A COMMUNIST COUNTRY SINCE ALL OF THE FRENCH POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE CRITICIZED THE SITUATION IN KAMPUCHEA EXCEPT THE COMMUNISTS, WHO HAVE AVOIDED TAKING A CLEAR POSITION. INTERNAL POLITICS THEREFORE FAVORED A FEW VIGOROUS WORDS IN FAVOR OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

8. HUMAN RIGHTS. THE THEME OF FRENCH CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS RUNS RIGHT THROUGH GUIRINGAUD'S SPEECH. THAT WOULD SEEM CALCULATED TO PLEASE THE US, BALANCING THE GESTURE TOWARD THE USSR OF EMPHASIZING DISARMAMENT. IT MUST BE REMEMBERED, OF COURSE, THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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FRANCE HAS HISTORICALLY BEEN A LEADER IN THE FIGHT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, IN AND OUT OF THE UN; THIS IS A THEME WHICH IS RELATIVELY SAFE POLITICALLY IN THE PRESENT FRENCH CLIMATE.
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